INAUGURAL ADDRESS

OF

REV. NATHANIEL WEST, D. D.

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THE

Scientific and Theological Grandeur

OF HISTORY.

AN

INAUGURAL ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BY ORDER OF

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE DANVILLE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, AND IN PRESENCE OF THE SYNOD OF KENTUCKY,

IN THE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, DANVILLE,

BY

REV. NATHANIEL WEST, D. D.

PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY,

OCTOBER 16, 1868.

FRANKFORT, KY.,
PRINTED BY A. G. HODGES.
1869.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AND FATHERS AND BRETHREN OF THE SYNOD OF KENTUCKY:

I am called upon to speak, to-night, in praise of the Department of "Biblical and Ecclesiastical History," to vindicate the existence and value of that Chair of instruction you have here met to rehabilitate, and the responsibilities of which it will be mine, henceforth, to strive laboriously and faithfully to sustain. I shall be pardoned if, upon the threshold of this investiture and inauguration, I express the embarrassment I feel, not less in view of the great imperfections I bring to the discharge of the duties of this Chair, than in memory of the distinguished abilities and signal services with which, in days past, its high behests have been both answered and adorned. I have to crave your indulgence in another regard. The exhibition of inadequacy must ever be conspicuous in what seems to me scarce less than presumption, viz, the attempt to explicate upon immature preparation, and in this presence, even the most general conception of a theme whose almost boundless scope and comprehensive relations have not already been mastered, to some reasonable extent, by a long life of study, patient and intense.

Let me depend, therefore upon your forbearance, while I occupy the brief hour allotted to this interest, with some observations upon the *Scientific and Theological Idea of History in general, and the Grandeur of Ecclesiastical History as the Centre and Substance of it all.* The presentation of this view may not be inappropriate to the present occasion.

To most men, history, in general, is a field of instruction repulsive and uninteresting, except as a matter of momentary curiosity. It reveals to them nothing but the *débris* of by-gone ages. Like the valley of the prophet's vision it is full of bones, "very many" and "very dry," exanimated forms and shattered fragments of the past, withered, mouldered, cold, scattered over the wide waste of ages, destitute of organization and vitality. They see in it only a sepulchre of the dead, a charnel-house of dates and anecdotes, a sapless narration, something unworthy the severe and manly discipline of a well-educated mind. It is to them, only a barren coacervation of events, an unagglutinated chronicle of facts without principle of arrangement, harmony, progress, enchainment, or ulterior end; the merest juxtaposition of occurrences, according to the caprice of whatever historian, void of any organic relation to themselves or to anything else, and constituting, in this way, the whole body of knowledge to be gathered from the monuments of generations and men.

This vice, partly due to the manner in which history has been written, partly to a false conception of its nature, and partly to narrowness of mental comprehension, is something which belongs not merely to the common mind, or afflicts the tyro and the sciolist, but has grown to be a prodigious spirit of evil, waiting upon a false philosophy, and seeking to eliminate from the precincts of science every vestige of evidence for the existence of an Infinite Power ruling the affairs of the world in the interest of a moral administration. Rather than recognize history as a living and visible embodiment of divine government, or admit a presiding personal and eternal Power as the ultimate reason and explanation of it all, the scientific degraders of it prefer to contemplate an ox, an ichneumon, a mastodon, a monkey, a man, an idea, a physical law, beyond the line of whose developments and agencies, co-or-

dinated with the forces of nature, history has nothing to look for and nothing to say. Or if, indeed, touched by a sentiment so exalted as that of a supreme presiding Intelligence, they do, at times, make use of the name "God," it is, nevertheless, only by the *word* they are moved as by a shadow that enchants for a moment, or a cadence of music that dies away upon the ear. They repel the reality in order to degrade both history and philosophy. God's place in history becomes simply scenical, rhetorical, æsthetical, theatrical. He is without positive value in a professedly positive scheme. He exists as an insoluble algebraical X, an indeterminate mathematical 0, a difficulty to be dealt with, an objection to be answered. His Personality is ignored, and He is manipulated somewhat after the fashion in which we handle an ancient manuscript, a code of legislation, or a disintered megatherium. In the schedule of the history of humanity, there is no central presiding, personal, over-ruling power, no genesis, either moral or divine, of any event, no co-ordination of history with a purpose beneficent and wise.

But history, without a central principle, and without a presiding Intelligence, is impossible. History, without God, cannot be. *God exists.* There is a personal intelligent Power, above all, beyond all, over, in, and through all, the Power that creates, the Power that upholds, the Power that moves, the Power that determines the laws of existence. He is, Himself, the universal axiomatic fact, the primary indemonstrable and necessary postulate of the problem of the universe and man. He is the only original, and absolute Source, Cause, Essence, Support, and End, of all life, light, beauty, order, goodness, truth and power, the infinite and eternal Background, Base, Bond, Bosom and Summit, of universal thought, motion and existence. In the ongoing of history are unfolded a Divine Providence, a moral government, an aim, as clearly discernible,

by induction and observation, as are any of the laws of natural or metaphysical science, and in the light of which history can alone receive its just interpretation. History, as thus originated and pervaded by God, is something more than a succession and farrago of fortuitous occurrences and adventures, on the one hand, something more than a rude *ensemble* of numerical and geometrical forces, on the other, in each case alike aimless and unmeaning. It is neither undesigned nor yet merely architectural. It possesses both intention and life. It is a *vital organism*, moving on towards some predetermined end, animated by some high imperial purpose, every consecutive epoch of its sublime march only revealing, in clearer light, the magnificent design which, from the very beginning, has been the motive cause of all. It is always an anabasis into something more lofty, a prefiguration and prophecy of what is to follow. It constitutes a unitous life. Its entire character and office are hermeneutical. Particular histories of nations are but parts of an organized whole, continuous series of successive and cyclical movements, throughout all the ages and generations of men, in which the movement, relatively the last, subsumes and concentrates all that has gone before it, detaches and relinquishes all that henceforth is to disappear, and is yet the prolific germ and condition of all that remains to be. To grasp this vast conception, in all the fullness of its bearing, is to lay the foundation of the science of history. It is to teach that history is engendered and developed according to the high purpose of God. It is to declare that we never think aright, in reference to history, unless we think within the limits of a divine and systematic unity, and that the determination of history is the determination of the sublime thought of God. Facts and dates are indeed necessary elements of history, but they are not history itself. They are only the milestones and figures on the

highway of time, marking the progress and attainment of a mighty purpose travelling onward to the goal of its accomplishment. History—what is it? It is life, it is spirit, it is thought, it is movement in time, controlled by God, its central principle, and co-ordinated with His eternal purpose, whatever that purpose may be, as the ultimate end and explanation of it all. Not, indeed, that every man is not a factor in history, not that Satan is not the same, nor that God is not a factor in history. Each of these distinct personalities, human, satanic, divine, contribute daily to weave the mysterious web of individual and universal life. But God is more than a factor *in* history. He is a factor *over* it. Man proposes, God disposes. Satan rules, God overrules. One event determines another, God predetermines all. All things eventuate according to a preconceived, an archetypal plan, a perfect ideal of moral wisdom, despite the cross-purposes of Satan and man. History is but another name for Providence in action. It is an exegesis of the divine ordination. It is the government of God made visible. It is the demonstration of the omnipresence of His purpose, and of His own intervention. It is His intelligence and high decree in movement. After all that Satan or man, in their free personalities, as factors of history, can do, history, in its last analysis, is the counter-stroke of divine action. We can teach nothing less than this without representing Him, in whose bosom are the seat and source of all providence and law, as an "*Ens Extramundanum*," a personality exiled beyond the limits of the world and history, and of less importance in the affairs of the universe than some Oriental Shah, very grand and very worshipful, but without even the power or prerogative of an ordinary police. It is only the recognition of a divine idea and divine purpose in history that imparts to it all the majesty of its ongoing, and the whole inspiration and impressive-

ness of its instruction, the idea of an initial, central, final, all-controlling purpose and plan, without which it would be, at best, but a vast fatalism enclosing the world in its iron circle, a dark urn of destiny, mournful and cheerless, enshrining only the ashes of the dead.

This sublime conception of history has been made, at different times, and in different ways, the subject of most vigorous assault, by the aggressors against divine revelation. The ancient materialistic philosophy, denying as it did the presence of a presiding providence in the affairs of the world, and thereby rendering any true science of history impossible, has been evoked in modern days, from its ancient tomb, and, joining hands with a vulgar rationalism, has waged war against this view. It builds itself upon a false cosmogony, a false theory of the universe. Incident to the same interest, but from another direction, pantheistic philosophy, while potent as a polemic against this shallow infidelity, has yet lent its powerful influence in favor of substituting impersonal Reason, an abstract Idea, in the place of a Personal God, in the system of Nature. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have witnessed a violent conflict between Naturalism and Supernaturalism on the one hand, and between Pantheism and Theism on the other. This conflict has left its impress upon the writers of history, both civil and ecclesiastical. The German and French philosophical schools have mingled their waters together and in one poisonous stream diffused their errors over the whole field of European and American literature. The pantheism of Hegel and the positivism of Comte, alike deny that a Personal God presided at the origin of the actual universe. Both assert a law of development—the one, that history is the self-evolution of the Absolute Impersonal Idea, coming to consciousness, however, only in the individual personal "Me;" the other, that history is a development of the

rude forces of nature, through three successive stages which it denominates the "theological or superstitious," the "metaphysical or abstract," and the "positive or scientific," meaning by the last the materialistic and mechanical. According to the one, history is a branch of Metaphysics. According to the other, it is a branch of Physics. In the one, religion is the evolution of the moral side of the Absolute Idea, wherein man becomes, at the same time, the worshiper and the Deity. In the other, it is a development from the Fetichism of a cannibal or a Fejee-Islander, destined now to pass forever away, since the era of positive science has dawned!

In opposition to both these pernicious views, and to the philosophical errors on which they are founded—part of the revived "ψευδωνυμος γνῶσις" of modern days—we plant the living word of the living God. Against the atheistic cosmogony which underlies the atheistic conception of history, we appeal to the scientific principles enunciated, or implied, at the very threshold of divine revelation. We adopt the truths of the Hebrew Genesis as the veritable "Principia" of all philosophy. We postulate, first of all, the existence of a Personal God, before all things, in opposition to atheism and pantheism. We affirm the law of causation to be real and objective, in opposition to all those theories which make it either a subjective idea, a regulative principle of the understanding, a merely logical conclusion compelled by intellectual impotence, or a force immanent in Nature, but not transitive. We assert the primary operation of this law to be coeval with the commencement of Time; in other words, we assert Creation in opposition to an unbeginning eternal development from the substance of God. We deny the identity of God and His works. We maintain that all things advance, according to fixed laws impressed upon them in their original creation, and that the whole universe is sustained, from

day to day, in its vital forces and unceasing developments, by a power above all law, and without which neither the universe nor its laws are possible. We aver that He who is the efficient is also the final cause of all things. We behold a divine purpose in the whole constitution of nature and man. We recognize the Fall of man into sin, and the promise of salvation by a Redeemer. We accept the original divisions and epochs of time, in the order of creative wisdom, as symbols of eras and dispensations yet to be, types of "*sæcula*" still to come on, marking the mighty interpositions of God, in His moral and providential government, and unfolding in still higher degree, and with brighter illustration, the exalted purpose that reigned in His mind, before the world was. In deriving, thus, our scientific and philosophical principles from the opening record of divine revelation, we achieve a double victory. Not only is the Naturalistic cosmogony, and the atheistic view of history to which it gives birth, utterly overthrown, but the whole Pantheistic scheme encounters, at the same time, a refutation it is powerless to withstand. A personal God, distinct from His works, the Creator and Final Cause of all, effecting all things according to the counsel of His own will, ruling the world and ruling man, developing His own high purpose for His own glory, this it is that redeems history from the reproach, on the one hand, of a purposeless, blind, and fatalistic evolution, and, on the other, from an impersonal, purely abstract, ideal, and metaphysical process, and consecrates it to a service that is divine. The genesis of our philosophy of Nature, corresponds with the "Genesis" of divine revelation, and supplies us with a true genesis and science of history.

The transition from history, in general, to "Biblical and Ecclesiastical History" is not difficult. It is effected simply by the introduction of the idea of the Kingdom of God on earth, as administered by Jesus Christ, and in His be-

half, or, in other words, by the apprehension of the supreme purpose of God in Christ for the salvation of men, and the display of His own glory. It is only another phase of the same great subject, or rather a grander and loftier view of the divine purpose than it is possible for even creation to afford. It is the consideration of *that*, without which creation itself had probably never emerged, that wondrous purpose of redeeming love the embodiment of which appears, centrally, in the Incarnation of the Eternal Son—a purpose so bound up with the whole of creation, with nature, grace, and glory, with past, present, and future, with God's behaviour to us, and our relations as sons of Adam to Him, that it is forever impossible to extricate it from the design of creation itself, or from the numerous dispensations of a constant and universal providence. It is indispensable to our existence. It is the atmosphere in which we breathe, and live, and move, and have our being. It covers us, underlies us, and is all around us. It affects us without our knowing it. We speak of history Sacred, history Secular, history Biblical, history Ecclesiastical. The distinctions are convenient, and serve an important end, but still they are only broken lights of one great theme. The Kingdom of God in Christ Jesus, as the exponent of the divine purpose, is that which animates and informs all the movements of history. Subjectively defined, Church History is the scientific apprehension, construction, and embodiment in literature, of the facts, events, causes, relations, influences, and aims, of the visible kingdom of God on earth, characterized by whatever description, signalized by whatever fortune or form. Objectively defined, it is the evolution, in space and time, of God's eternal purpose of redeeming love, through Jesus Christ, whose goings forth are "of old," and whose increasing manifestation is to be "world

without end."* Along this pathway of developement, from the eternity past, onward to the brightness that bathes the endless age, it marks the progress of this sublime purpose from lower to higher forms of realization, from obscurer to clearer dispensations, until lost in the fullness of its own glory. What, in the eternal thought, is incapable of increase or diminution, and enjoys a supreme self-perfection and immutability, yet puts on the disguise of imperfection and variation during its terrene development upon the plane of history, and waits for the lapse of ages, ere it ripens into glorious accomplishment. The history of the evolution of this purpose is the history of the Kingdom of God in Christ, wider in its scope than the technical history of "Ecclesia," as commonly understood, unrestricted to the local developments of any particular organization, but determined by, and unfolded to, the whole extent of the contents of the divine purpose, in its ongoing on earth. It is history enacted in behalf, and by reason of the Church, though hidden as to its sacred connexions from the eyes of the vulgar. It is history universal, in its highest relations. All literature, art, law, science, philosophy, all struggles civil, military, political, all social progress, all forms of civilization, even the manners and customs of society, all types of religion, all men, and all nations, are but correlated parts of

*The English word "*History*," coming to us through the Latin *Historia* and derived from the Greek *ἱστορέω*, itself derived from *ἵστημι* to *know*, refers purely to the subjective side of the idea, and denotes (*a*) information received upon inquiry and (*b*) the science of facts and their relations, as set forth in writing or literature. The German word *Geschichte*, from *geschehen* to occur, to happen, to be done, unites both the subjective and objective sides of the idea, and denotes, not only the "*Historia rerum gestarum*," but the "*Res gestæ*" themselves, as living actualities, i. e. both *what* has occurred and the *scientific narration* of it. The Hebrew expression for history is סֵפֶר תּוֹלֹדֹת *book of the generations*, or simply תּוֹלֶדֶת, used convertibly, to denote a *genealogy*, a *family register*, an *origin*, a *history*. The Hebrew etymology gives, forcibly, the genetic idea of history objectively, a begetting, being born, a becoming, and corresponds to the philosophical idea expressed so frequently, by German scholars, in their favorite terms *Entstehung*, *Entwickelung*, *Aufhebung*, a Rise, a Developement, an Outheaving.

this. There is not a solitary interest of the human family that is not garnered up in the comprehensiveness of its universal grasp. The history of the Kingdom of God on earth measures the diameter and circumference of all history. The entire Antideluvian and Patriarchal Dispensations, the whole course of Judaism, as also the fortunes of pre-christian Heathenism, as all history that has come after the Incarnation, enter into the warp and woof of the ongoing of the Kingdom of God. There is not a single truth adumbrated or perverted in all the various religions of mankind, antecedent to Christianity, which cannot be found in Christianity itself, in its fullest and most perfect form. More than this, the fortunes of the nations of the earth have all been intermingled with and determined by the fortunes of the Church of God. The histories of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, yea of classic Greece and Rome, are explicable only in the light of that supreme purpose whose end is the redemption of a lost world. Study whatever nation, hold inquest upon whatever epoch or era of the past, interpret the conflicts of earthly kingdoms, scan every footprint of divine providence throughout the East, the West, in ancient or in modern times, note the geographical march of conquest and civilization, careering in its course with the course of the sun, from the cradle of its birth in an Asiatic clime, skirting the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, advancing from Europe across the wide Ocean, until it treads with steady steps upon the soil of the New World, it is the march of religion, the evolution of the high purpose of God for the salvation of men, shining in the firmament of His providence, coming forth "as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoicing as a strong man to run a race." Despite all antagonisms and dissensions, all interacting influences propulsive or repellent, all contradictions and disharmonies, all political hostilities and civil revenges, all opposition to

truth, all assertion of error, the ages, the nations, and the movements of the world, are yet organically bound and systematically co-ordinated unto one and the same end. The vital throb and universal pulse-beat in all, is the purpose of God in Christ. It may be Pharaoh or Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus or Belshazzar, Caligula or Nero, Julian or Mahomet, Goth, Hun, Arab, Tartar, Greek or Roman, who figures prominently as the human factor, but it is God over all unfolding, through Christ, who is the spring of all providence, His eternal purpose of grace. It is this that gives unity to the tangled and seemingly aimless movements of the nations, and evokes harmony out of their jarring discords and destinies. Within and beyond all these movements are the interests of the Kingdom of God, retrospective even to the gates of Eden. And notwithstanding the convenient distinction between history, sacred and secular, notwithstanding the early parting of the historic stream into two separate currents, the one running through the covenanted line of Seth, the other through the apostate line of Cain, the one possessing spiritual grace, the other without it, it still remains true that the history and fortunes of the Kingdom of God on earth enclose, in their highest relations, the history and fortunes of humanity. Nothing is more comprehensive than this Kingdom. The omnipresence of a divine purpose in Christ, working all things to a predetermined end in every age, and perpetually reflecting itself in the troubled stream of universal history, as the sunlight mirrors itself in the foaming waterfall, or dazzles in the billowy sea, is a truth the brightness of which will not allow us to be blind to its existence. A great man, the elder Edwards, has well said "The history of the world is the history of redemption." Church history is incomplete without the history of the world. The history of the world is inexplicable without the history of the Kingdom of God. This latter towers in pre-

eminence over all other history. What the majestic cathedrals of Cologne, Milan, and Rome, are to inferior buildings, what a prospect from the snow-wreathed head of Mont Blanc or the glory-smitten range of Lebanon is to the most ordinary vista, what the mighty Indus, and Ganges, and Orinoco, and Mississippi, are to meandering rivulets and brooks, this, in the magnificence of its proportions, in the elevation of its view, and in the grandeur of its volume, is Church History to all other. Yea, it sweeps all oceans, continents, islands, seas, and rivers; it is universal.

If it is objected that a view so spacious transcends the legitimate province of ecclesiastical history, the all-sufficient answer is that none narrower will meet either the requirements of the divine purpose, the facts of the case, the demands of a science, or the word of God. The Bible itself, in the scope of its historic page, consents to no less. Were it not that the pantheistic philosophers had substituted Impersonal Reason for God, in the system of the universe, some of the sublimest testimonies in behalf of this view could be culled from their writings. The same, to a certain extent, is true of the Naturalistic theorizers who put Nature in the place of God. Destroy these two philosophemes, re-enthrone God in the philosophical systems, and the language of Schelling and Fichte and Hegel, Vacherot and Vera, Comte and Taine, would abound with a witness in this behalf, as powerful and conclusive as it is now deceptive and fatal. Leibnitz, a christian philosopher, accounts all history not only a "theodicy" but a "prophecy and proof of redemption." Vico and Herder assert, the one that we must ever "begin with God," because all history is but the "ordination of a divine purpose," a "civil and ratiocinative theology of divine providence," the other that it is a "hymn to Christ and salvation." Chateaubriand, Nicole, Schlegel, Mueller, Leo,

even Niebuhr, and after him Arnold, none of them ecclesiastical historians, have yet in their study of history as a science, acknowledged Christianity to be the key of it all, a "*philosophia prima*" to account for and explain all the movements of the human race. Cousin does not hesitate to say that the first real and true historian of humanity "*must* have considered history from the height of Christianity and given to it Christianity for a centre, a measure, and an aim." Von Mueller, in one of his letters to Charles Bonnet, affirms Christianity to be "the sum of all history, the perfection of all philosophy, the interpreter of every revolution, and the key to all seeming contradictions." "Ecclesiastical history," says Lord Bacon, in his Advancement of Learning, "receiveth the same divisions with history civil; but further may be divided into the history of the Church by a general name, the history of prophecy, and the history of providence." But this is a scope no less than universal, for it embraces the whole fortunes of the church militant among the nations, the "springing and germinant accomplishment" of all prophecy since the world began, and the judgments and blessings of God throughout the career of our whole race. It is, in short, encyclopædic.

Who can doubt, for one moment, that the submersion of the Egyptians in the Red Sea, the catastrophes that befel Babylonian and Persian monarchs, the victories of Alexander the Great, the accession of Constantine to the throne of the Cæsars, the final extinction of the Western Roman Empire by Odoacer, and of the Eastern by Mahomet II, the shock of the Crusades in their vain effort to recover the Holy Sepulchre, the wars of the Reformation, with all their policies and diplomacies, enter as truly into the fibre and texture of ecclesiastical history, as do the Bondage in Egypt, the Captivity in Babylon, the establishment of Christianity as a "*religio licita*," the cor-

ruptions of Scholasticism and Popery, and the bitter rivalries, between the Papacy and Patriarchate, that woke their echoes five hundred years, along the banks of the Tiber and the Bosphorus? Why is it that neither Gibbon, nor Guizot, nor Michelet, nor Robertson, nor Macauley, can portray the civil and political fortunes of the periods that engage their pens, without weaving Christianity therein and making conspicuous the Church of God? Why is it that D'Aubigne's "History of the Reformation" is a history of civil, military, and political, as well as religious convulsions? What is it that makes Dean Milman's "History of Latin Christianity" one of the best histories of the whole mediæval period? or the "Ecclesiastical History of England," by the venerable Bede, the most reliable account of the Anglo-Saxon Commonwealth? How comes it that, in the methodical distribution of the material of ecclesiastical history, the rubrics and divisions, so convenient in ordinary times, become utterly worthless, in times such as those of the Reformation and the English Commonwealth —the times of Luther and Cromwell? What, and how, except that in the mighty crises and volcanic upheavings and overturnings of the nations, all the forces of humanity, civil, military, political, religious, social, rush together and are fused into one common unity and energy, cause and consequence at the same time of the stupendous movement God himself has ordained? Do *we* need, after our own experience, to be taught this truth? French, Spanish, American, Italian, Mexican revolutions, are as truly epochs in ecclesiastical history as are the divulsions of the East and West, of Protestant and Catholic, of Lutheran and Reformed. Church history can no more dispense with the Peace of Westphalia or the Edict of Nantes, than with the Protest at Spires or the Theses at Wittenberg. Roman, French, and German Emperors, figure as extensively as do Italian Pontiffs. Constantine and Clovis, Charlemagne,

the Othos, and Barbarossa, are no less important than Sylvester and Leo, Hildebrand and Pio Nono. Saint Louis under the oaks of Vincennes, and Henry VIII in his royal court, can no more be omitted, in the explanation of the ecclesiastical history of their times, than Gregory IX or Clement VII at Rome. In the high ordination of God, Kings and Presidents, Sultans and Czars, Moguls and Shahs, are just as necessary, in their sphere, for the outworking of His divine purpose, even while He sits in the heavens and holds them "in derision," as are Prophets and Apostles, Presbyters, Patriarchs, and Popes. The councils of Nicœa, Chalcedon, Basle, Constance, Trent, the Synods of Dort and Westminster, play relatively no more important a part in the grand *role* of Providence, than do Parliament and Congress, Sublime Porte and Chambers of Deputies, Reichsrath and Cortes. The interests of Christ's Kingdom embraces them all, and all are but mere instruments, under God, working constantly in its behalf. Admirable, therefore, is the profound utterance of Professor Brandis, of Bonn, in his history of Philosophy, when he teaches that "in proportion as historical investigations are elaborated into a universal historical science, in the same proportion will Christ be acknowledged as the eternal and divine substance of the whole historical life of the world, and His sacred person will greet us everywhere on the historic page, as it greets us everywhere in the scriptures of our faith."

It is more than a matter of idle curiosity to know that the profound view which vindicates for ecclesiastical history its claim to a throne so lofty, pertains, in modern times, to the era when a signal revolution was achieved in the treatment of Astronomical science. The great conception, that Christ and His people constitute the centre of all movement and development in history, was, first of all, clearly advanced, in modern times, in the age that

accepted the heliocentric theory of the planetary system. Copernicus had already broken away from the ancient theories of Hipparchus, Ptolemy, and Eudoxus. Already he had uttered the majestic words, "By no other combination have I been able to find so admirable a symmetry, in the diverse parts of this great whole, as by placing the Torch of the world, the Sun, which governs the whole family of stars, upon a royal throne, in the centre of Nature's temple." Already Galileo, Kepler, and Newton, had demonstrated that this planet of ours is only part of a vast system, governed by identical laws. The doctrine that the Sun is a central, unifying, organizing power, was firmly established. The study of the Bible, moreover, had contributed to redeem European intellect from the despotism and stagnation of nearly a thousand years. It did more. It inoculated the minds of the children of Japheth with the ideas of the sons of Shem. A higher than a merely scholastic, classical, or secular view of the world was attained. The impulse communicated itself to every department of knowledge, and was felt in the province of universal history. It was reserved, however, for the illustrious Bossuet to do for history, what Copernicus had done for Astronomy. In the preparation of his "*Histoire Universelle*," first published A. D., 1681, composed expressly for the instruction of the Dauphin of France, he elaborated a work, the whole design of which was "to consider, in the order of time, the progress of the people of God and that of the great empires of the world, both which roll on together in that great movement of the ages where they have, so to speak, one and the same course." It was the glory of Bossuet that he made the history of God's people the centre of all history, and Christ Himself the central light in the movements of the nations. The redeeming purpose of God in Christ was accepted as the final cause of all creation, providence, and

existence, terrene or celestial, the soul of all historical development. What is this—if I may coin a word—but the *Christocentric* theory of history? Is it any marvel that, beneath the magic of such an organon as this, so simple yet effective, the gifted State Counsellor of Louis XIV should have triumphantly construed into coherence and unity the whole historic material of antiquity, from the Creation down to the empire of Charlemagne? Does it seem any longer incredible that all history is consecrated to the interests of the Kingdom of God? What magnificence of conception! What glittering pyramids of witness, brighter and mightier than those that skirt the Lybian desert, are here erected to the glory of Christ and His Church, all along the pathway of history! How nobly is history redeemed from the reproach of the skeptic, whose purblind vision observes only an incoherent and accidental succession of occurrences, orderless, aimless, a "*rudis indigestaque moles*," and how grandly is history lifted to the dignity of a science, all whose facts are referable to fixed and universal laws, and all whose principles are subject to a most exalted generalization, even into the unity of God's eternal purpose, in Christ!

But Bossuet, justly celebrated, yet shines in a glory not his own. As it happened to Des Cartes, whose famous "*Cogito, ergo sum*" became the foundation of modern metaphysics, that the psychological idea, upon which modern philosophy is built, was historically due to the renowned "son of Monica," so is it demonstrable, beyond all cavil, that the sublime conception of the Catholic Bishop, and its first application to written history, is an inheritance from the same peerless original. The star of Bossuet is eclipsed by the shining of Augustine. It is the "Doctor of Grace" who offuscates with his splendor, not only the "Father of Modern Metaphysics" but the "eagle-eyed Bishop of Meaux." Antecedent to every attempt to con-

struct the history of the world around the history of the people of God, and consecrate the whole to ecclesiastical service, stands the immortal *"De Civitate Dei."* The whole conception of Bossuet, abating its hierarchical side, is Augustinian throughout. Take away Rome, forget the Pagans and Barbarians, forego the merely philosophical discussions, make allowance for the difference of details and times, the "Universal History" is almost word for word, the "City of God"—that volume which instructed the ancient church in the great doctrine that Christianity is the keystone in the arch of history, and that the cessation of history only awaits the final accomplishment of the purpose of God in Christ, and then comes *"terminus hujus sæculi"*—the end of this world. With invincible demonstration and eloquence did that illustrious Church-father establish the fact that the history of the church is coextensive with the history of the world, in its highest relations, that, before history began, the adorable Persons of the Trinity were confederated into a covenant of redemption, that the whole work of creation and providence contemplates the fulfilment of this imperial purpose, that all things subsist *by* and *for* Jesus Christ, that all the ages past have only contributed to exalt His greatness and prepare His coming, that all the centuries following His advent shall only extol His compassion and power, and prepare His coming again, and that when history shall attain its goal, and perish from time, the sole grandeur that shall eternally survive will be Christ and His people, the Head and the members of the Church, and God be "All in all." The "City of God" shall shine, forever, in the lustre of unsetting glory, while all else shall be engulfed in the abyss of darkness and death. I need scarcely add, that the remarkable work of President Edwards, the "History of Redemption," is but a reappearance and more specific elaboration of this sublime doctrine.

It only remains to be shown, that the view herewith advanced, is in consonance with the word of God. Human suffrages, whether theological or philosophical, and the conceptions of human science, however profound, are not its only supports. The light that shines is light from heaven. The doctrine is divine. It came from God, and holds its theopneustic place in every page of revelation. It is the doctrine of Moses, of Daniel, of Paul, of John, inscribed so plain, that he who runs may read. It has been, for the master-minds of the Church, like a bright lamp swinging in the firmament, casting its rays athwart the darkened track of time. Its genesis and complete apocalypse are in the sacred scriptures. It is the interpretation of all prophecy and providence. It is the dominant tone heard amid all the variations of the psalm of history. Moses is the author, in sacred literature, of the universal ground-lines of all historic progress. It is he who first announces the historic ordinations of Jehovah in connection with a divine purpose, the substance of which is the development and fortunes of the Kingdom of God on earth. It is he who relates them all to this one end, recognized in the distribution of the earth to the sons of Noah, even before the confusion of tongues at Babel.* In his valedictory song on the confines of Canaan, he charges the people of Israel to "remember the days of old, the years of many generations, when the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, and set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel."† He would instruct them that the original distribution of the earth, the overthrow of the signal-tower upon the plains of Shinar, and the dispersion of the nations, were all effected to suit the design of redemption and the future propaga-

*Gen. 10: 1–5, 6–20, 21–31, 32.
†Deut. 32: 2, 7, 8.

tion of the gospel among mankind. A vast blessing, yet in reserve, was mingled with a chastisement then present. The preservation of the names of the nations and the designation of their geographical limits, in the records of sacred history, were connected with the mercy that yet should flow to them from the fountain of eternal love. Though Shem had become, in history, the stable and chosen element for the immediate development of the purpose of God, yet the zones where Japhet and Ham should dwell were not to be utterly excluded from the salvation to be revealed. The unchosen nations were indeed "separated," and "suffered to walk in their own ways," but yet even to this, the divine purpose had fixed a goal, beyond which it was not possible to pass. Though God "leaves" them, He does not "forsake" them. Evermore their history is related unto, resumed and bound up in connection with the history of the people of God. Secular though it be, it is yet sacred, and evinces, with transparent clearness, that the word of God does not content itself with merely describing the fortunes of the people of God, but associates them, from the very beginning, with the fortunes of the nations of the earth. The great Apostle of the Gentiles has enlarged upon the same theme. In his unequaled theistic discourse upon Mar's Hill, in the presence of the Acropolis crowned with colossal statues of the gods, he embodies, in eloquent words, a conception of universal history purely theological and moral. He asserts that all ethnological expansion was subordinated to the interests of the Kingdom of God, that the original diffusion of the nations, over the whole earth, in their chronological and geographical limitations, was in accordance with the pre-determination of God, who had not only "made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth," but had also "determined the *times* fore-appointed and the *bounds* of their habitations"—language evidently alluding

to the historic founders of the nations, and to the outlines of the nationalities indicated by Moses. This distribution he expressly declared to be theological, viz: "that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him," though He was "not far from every one of them." And in confirmation of this, he hesitated not to cite the sentiment of the Cilician Aratus, "we also are His offspring" —one of unnumbered thousands of instances that might be reclaimed from the broad field of ancient heathen literature, Indian and Roman, as well as Greek, to the same end. Grant that their historic "times," or epochs and eras, had indeed been times of "ignorance" and that "To the Unknown God" their last altar was erected. Grant that the design of God towards them, remained as yet unfulfilled. Still their history, in every phase of it, was a theology. The whole positive cultus of heathenism was a cry for salvation. One half its superstitions and traditions were unconscious prophecies of Him who is the "Desire of all Nations," mock suns, indeed, yet proclaiming a true Sun, travelling somewhere in His strength. The civil and political conflicts of the Greeks, with the surrounding kingdoms, had compelled them to look upward, in the hour of danger and disaster for divine succor. Even the prayer of Ajax for light in that desperate battle where Jove covered the field with thick darkness, and the supplication of Achilles in the floods of the angry Scamander, not less than the towering philosophy of Plato, the sublime hymn of Cleanthes, or the triumph of Justice and Mercy together, as celebrated in Epos and Drama, all had this one end in view, to make them "seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him." It was a part of creation's groaning, in pain, and traveling in expectation of the victory to be achieved by Christ over the works of Satan, who, now, for a time, usurped a sovereignty over the nations, not his own. What can be clearer

than that great design of the distribution of the heathen nations, not less than of the temporary segregation of the Jewish people, the one without, the other with, a written revelation, was relatively and precisely the same, even the preparation of a theatre for the ongoing of a divine purpose in both, whose fullness should at length be found alone in Jesus Christ and his redeemed Church?

The prophet Daniel has given us a yet more expanded view. His vision, in sacred history, stretches from the blotting out, on the one hand, of the visible Kingdom of God on earth, as nationally and politically organized, to its restoration and establishment, in superior form and splendor, after all the Gentile powers of the world have run their appointed course. The vista measures the whole distance from the Babylonish Captivity to the Second Advent of Christ. The history of the people of God, both Jewish and Christian, is inseparably linked with the fortunes of all earthly kingdoms, and the problems of national revolutions and overturnings rendered forever insoluble apart from this central relation. The great and decisive epochs, or turning points, of the one, are made coincident with those of the other. In the progress of the divine purpose of God in Christ, the evidences of a pre-established harmony between the times of the world and the times of the Church everywhere supervene. There is a foreordained economy of "times and seasons," which God holds in His own power, not snatching, as does man, the fortunate opportunity to achieve his wish, but, at fixed astronomical instants, causing to shine forth, in conspicuous display, the essence of His supreme intention with reference to the children of men. The "*καιροὶ προτετάγμενοι*" of the Apostle, the "times foreappointed" as clearly allude to the prophetic delineation of the four universal empires, as they do to the original Mosaic outlines of history, or as do the *ὁροθέσιαι*, the "bounds" of

the same Apostle, to the distribution and range of the nations, whether as described by Moses or Daniel. They point us to those mighty epochs in history, adjusted providentially, and prophetically, not less in reference to the matter, than to the moments, of them, wherein the Church of God finds her earthly fortunes, and her highest and most lasting interest, inseparably associated with the fortunes of the nations, whether, to the nations or the Church, they be prosperous or adverse. It is in this way the Kingdom of God advances, in its outward development, not alone by the outpouring of the Divine Spirit and the preaching of the truth, but as well by the rise and fall of national and political organizations, yea being disciplined and flourishing amid the dissolution of civilized empires, the irruption of barbarian hordes, the overthrow of time-sanctioned institutions, and the formation of new relations sprung from new disruptions, each step of the progress marking some fresh germination of the purpose of God in reference to the salvation of men, and evoking some fresh energy of the Church in relation to mankind at large. And when we take into consideration that the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ, which He showed to His servant John, is but a continuation of His revelation to Daniel "greatly beloved," one grand *resume* or compend, in symbol and prediction, of the confluent and interacting histories of the Church and the world in their ordained relations, a dramatic representation of the whole troubled tragedy to be enacted by humanity, in its long struggle through successive ages, an unfolding by seal, trumpet, and vial, of the divine purpose, from the first vision in Patmos to the last one in Paradise restored—the horoscope of the future with the Kingdom of Jesus in the ascendant—when we think of all this, we shall need no more to convince us that the history of the Kingdom of God on earth embraces a domain no less contracted than the circumference of the

world, and careers along a measuring-line no shorter than the duration of time.

Such is the comprehensive and organic view of history presented in the Bible. Let us leave to others all the glory that is justly their own, but let us confess that to the "Spirit of Prophecy" which is the "testimony of Jesus," is due that whole philosophy which makes Christ and His people the key of all history, and the Kingdom of God on earth the central light of the nations. Let us give to Greeks and Romans the pre-eminence as writers of separate political histories, but to Prophets and Apostles the glory of contemplating the human race as one, and co-ordinating its destinies with all that is required in the ongoing of the purpose of God in Christ. The sentimental and skeptical Renan himself is forced, in his brief review of the "History of the people of Israel," to admit that this view of history is, at least, "a Jewish product," and "one that, of all others, has lasted the longest," confessing also that "neither Saint Augustine, in the 'City of God,' nor Bossuet, in the 'Universal History,' have added to it anything essential." A loftier view than from even the top of Carmel, the glories of which he celebrates, a view from the "third heavens," where Paul and John alike purged their vision, might perhaps instruct him were it possible for him ever to reach so glorious a mount, that it is not merely a "Jewish," but more, a Christian product, or, better far, that it is the product of the Spirit of God Himself.

This view of history furnishes us with periodologies of different value whereby we are enabled to distribute, both as to time and topics, the vast material presented for our study. In the growth of history we are able to discover the laws by which it is moulded, both chronological and moral. We take the laws from the events themselves and impose upon history no *a priori* construction. We do

precisely as Kepler did when he discovered the "periodic times" of the planets and their relation to the planetary "distances," i. e., we measure the movements and note the correspondence, difference, and relations of the cycles. By observation, the astronomer describes not only the whole curve of a planet's orbit, but all the phases of its progress. The geologist, too, examines the crust of the earth and reports the successive formation of its strata, and the causes thereof. So with the history of the Kingdom of God. Observation of thousands of years of historic movement reveals, with equal certainty, not only the great ages and epochs through which the purpose of God has unfolded itself, but the moral connection of them with each other, and with the same marvellous end, both as to time and design. And here a field of amazing interest challenges our keenest scrutiny. Along with the moral design of God in history there runs another design, numerical and cyclical, the latter always being symmetrical and conterminous with the former. There is, if I may so call it, a theological geometry and mensuration, a divine arithmetic, in the whole ongoing of the history of the Kingdom of God, a relation and sacred proportion between the chronological sides of the "Ages," the "Times," and the "Seasons," so significant as to leave no room for doubt that is part of the "manifold," or variegated, "wisdom of God, according to the prearranged plan of the ages in Jesus Christ"—numerical and moral analogies, so strong and prominent, as to compel the conclusion that He who "limiteth a day" has measured out and distributed, with proleptic survey, the whole tract of time, and adjusted and consecrated the several parts of it to the several parts of the development of His eternal purpose. It is by no means accidental that the measuring line of the Antedeluvian dispensation should be chronologically symmetrical with that of the Levitical, or that the intervening period be-

tween the Flood and the Exodus should be so wondrously bisected by the Promise to Abraham, or that the Promise should divide exactly the whole line of history between Adam and Christ, or that from the Promise unto the final judgment upon Jerusalem should be exactly five periods of 430 years each. The moral events, the parallelisms and analogies, the significance of the relations, the interchangeable descriptions found in the scriptures, the organic unity and march of the whole development, not only as bearing upon the fortunes of the Church of God, but also upon the fortunes of the nations, forbid such a supposition. Nor is it by chance that the whole Mosaic dispensation is a series of varying chronological cycles, some less, some greater, yet of most wonderful correspondence and import, that 40 years from Moses to Joshua, and 450 years of Judges succeeding, making in all 490, or 70 times 7, should be the exact measure of 40 years from Samuel to David, and 450 of Kings succeeding, another compound cycle of 490, or 70 times 7; that then, as the line of history was to continue, 70 years of Captivity should ensue, at the close of which a prophet should announce 490 years more, or seventy 70 times 7 again, as the time that must transpire before Messiah should appear and the Holy City be given to destruction. Such repeated phenomena as these argue a chronological as well as moral design, and are sufficient to raise the inquiry whether, in New Testament history, similar symmetries and analogies are not to be found, and whether even in the history of the nations, and of humanity as a unit, similar laws of apportionment do not obtain, coincident with the great epochs and eras of the history of the Church. The historical "rotations" and "recurrences" of the nations, through successive, similar, and well-defined stages of existence and development, the "*corsi e ricorsi*" of Vico, caricatured, whether consciously or unconsciously, by both Hegel and Comte, according to

their respective philosophies, are admitted, by almost all scientific historians, to rest upon the solid foundation of a true induction.*

Abating all minor subdivisions, the whole chronological line of the history of the Kingdom of God on earth, measuring now nearly 6,000 years, divides itself into four great stadia, the epochs of which affect the whole world. Each stadium is distinguished by a peculiar dispensation or economy, the one relatively the last abolishing in its expansion, the imperfect form in which the one previous appeared, preserving, nevertheless, the identity and continuity of the visible kingdom in every essential feature of it, and exalting its manifestation to a higher degree of existence. The first stadium is the Antediluvian, and

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*Comte denies, in a note to the preface to the sixth volume of his *Philosophie Positive*, that he ever read or saw the writings of Vico, or Herder, or Hegel in any language, and claims complete originality in reference to his generalizations of history. His statement is, no doubt, true so far as a study of these authors, in their own works, is concerned, and also so far as relates to the untheological, unmetaphysical, and purely materialistic character of those generalizations. But it is scarcely possible to believe that a man of such extensive reading could have failed to be acquainted with the ideas and method of history as advanced by the philosophers to whom he alludes, especially when it is known that their writings were criticised, both in the way of praise and of blame, all over Europe, referred to by many writers, and even admitted by himself to be put within his reach by "indirect references, and insufficient extracts." This opinion is confirmed by the testimony of Mr. Morell, Professor Ferrier, Dr. Stirling, and others.

Prof. Goldwin Smith, in his "*Lectures on the Study of History*," is wrong when he asserts that Vico's "law of revolving cycles of men and events is a wild and fruitless dream." Per Contra, Villemain, Cousin, Jacobi, Herder, Michelet, Bunsen, Gioberti, and others, have triumphantly vindicated his principle. Prof. Smith confounds Vico's cyclical idea with the cyclical idea of the later skeptical Greeks and Romans, and with the modern Necessarian theory of physical science, as held by the Positive and Materialistic school, excluding Providence altogether from the sphere of history, and enthroning Fate in its place. Vico's cycles were not what Herder has happily characterized as the *whirling waltzes of Fate, everlasting beginnings without ends*—Umwaltzungen des Schicksals, ewige Anfangen ohne Ende—but revolutions of historic movement, progressive, and presided over by a Personal Providence. Vico is explicit. In his "*Scienza Nuova*," he says History is neither a blind concourse of atoms, "un Concorso cieco d'atomi"—nor an inexorable chain of causes and effects, "una sorda Catena di cagioni e d'effeti"—but a civil and ratiocinative Theology of Providence, "una Teologia Civile e Ragionata della Provvedenza," and that we must always begin with the recognition of God, "dobbiamo cominciare da una qualche cognizione di Dio." As to the Stoical theory, consult Neander's Church History, Torrey's translation, Vol. I, pp. 16, 17.

stretches from the Protevangel in Eden to the Universal Deluge. The second is Patriarchal, and stretches from the Deluge to the Exodus and the Sinaitic legislation. The third is Jewish and stretches from the Exodus and Sinai to the Incarnation and first Christian Pentecost. The fourth is Christian and stretches from the Incarnation and Pentecost to the present hour. Its terminus will coincide with the Second Advent of Christ. From Adam to Noah, from Noah to Moses, from Moses to Christ in humiliation, and from Christ in humiliation to Christ coming in power and great glory, these are world-times and Church-times together, each one associating, in indestructible unity, the coincident movements and fortunes of the nations of the earth and the people of God, and revealing their relative interaction, their permutations, and common progress.

Equally imposing and grand are the great divisions of the historical movements of the Kingdom, from the first Advent of Christ to the consummation of the eternal purpose of God. Viewed in its present and future fortunes, as described by the Word of God, it offers to our notice three stages of development, each successive one transcending in value and form the one preceding, the last affixing its seal of completion to all history, and arresting its progress forever. The first is the "*Regnum Crucis*" or Kingdom of the Cross, wherein the Church of Christ, not yet enjoying an outward visible dominion over the earth, shares in the humiliation which once was the lot of her divine Head, a Kingdom inward and spiritual alone, its Monarch personally absent, and retained in the heavens, until the times of Restitution, "*Ecclesia Militans*" in conflict and agony, all its spiritual members bearing their cross in patience and awaiting in hope their crown. Such is the Pre-Millenial state of the Church—"this present age." The second is the "Regnum Coronæ" or Kingdom of the Crown, when the long-deferred expectation

shall be fulfilled, and the "overcomer" shall sit with Christ on "His" throne, an age when the symbol of suffering shall be exchanged for that of joy and triumph, the Cross for the Crown, mourning for victory and jubilee, "*Ecclesia Triumphans*," when the colossal God-opposed powers of the world, built of gold and silver, brass, iron, and clay, shall crumble and dissolve, and "become like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors" which the wind carries away, "and the Kingdom and Dominion, and the greatness of the Kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." This is "the age about to be," the Millennial period, marked on the one side, by the binding of Satan, the resurrection of the righteous dead, and the freedom of the nations from Satanic deception, and on the other, by the loosing of Satan, the resurrection of the "rest of the dead," the deception of the nations renewed, in part, and the final victory over all the powers of darkness—the period of Apocalyptic insertion, when they who have part in the first resurrection "shall be the priests of God and of Christ," and "shall reign with Him a thousand years." It is the period of the "Restitution of all things." The third is the "*Regnum Gloriæ*" or Kingdom of Glory, the last and highest development of the eternal purpose of redeeming love, an age when, to the crown of righteousness and life, shall be added the brightness of Heaven forever, "*Ecclesia Splendens*," when the Kingdom will be complete, not alone in inward and spiritual, but in outward, visible, and material glory, to the whole extent of its heavenly and eternal organization; when there shall be "new heavens and new earth," "the Tabernacle of God with men," "no more curse," "no night," "no more death," "neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain," because "the former things are passed

away"—that glorious time when, in the successful accomplishment of the divine purpose of God in Christ, the Kingdom shall be delivered up to the Father, and God shall be "All in all." This is the Post-Millenial state of the Church, the "Age of the ages." Then that which is "perfect" will have come, and that which is "in part" will be done away. History will be no more. The Kingdom of Christ, subject no more to a changeful development, will have flowered and ripened into changeless perfection and beauty, and the fitful river of time, that bore an argosy so rich on its breast, will have come to mingle its waters with the "calm ocean of eternity." Such is the pleroma of that purpose which, begotten in Christ before the world began, has animated all the movements of history in its upward march, climbing the grand "*scala*" towards heaven, and is itself the interpretation of all providence, from "Paradise Lost" to "Paradise Regained."

To recite the fortunes of the Church of God on earth, in so much of its actual history as the course of time has registered, to show under what forms and dispensations she has existed, to tell when, where, how, she has extended herself throughout the world, to trace the geographical line of her march, to explain her epochs and ages, to recount what foes she has engaged and with what weapons she has fought, what corruptions have defiled her, what schisms have scandalized and what apostacies have well nigh wrecked her, and yet how, resurgent from all disaster, and victorious over every enemy, she has celebrated enduring triumphs, from age to age, standing alike at the cradle and the grave of empires and kingdoms that sought to compass her ruin; to define her organic relations to the governments and nations of the earth and attest the blessings she has bequeathed to mankind, to rehearse how she has witnessed for God, what persecutions and sufferings she has borne and by what spirit she has been

sustained, what showers of heavenly grace have descended upon her, and how, beneath them, she has fulfilled her mission to perishing men; to take account of her faith and love, her order and worship, her doctrine and life, her literature, art, science, legislation, philosophy, her great controversies and great councils, her great men and great events, her symbols, monuments and traditions, to show how, from age to age, she has been the centre of all history, the energy of every important movement, and how her whole progress has been but one gigantic unfolding of the purpose of God in Christ for the salvation of men, and the establishment of the Kingdom in glory—in short, to sympathise with, reconstruct, and reproduce the whole past, as a living present reality, in its religious, civil, and scientific relations and import—this is the burden of the Chair whose responsibilities I am called, under God, to endeavor to sustain.

Yet, if God shall give strength according to the day, it is in the spirit and upon the principles already indicated, I would desire to prosecute, if the means are before me, this arduous work. Above all things, I would seek to impress upon the intellects and hearts of the young men He may send here to receive instruction, and to prepare themselves for His service, that the history of the Kingdom of God on earth is not a mere narrative of isolated facts, explicable only by human interest and passion, or engendered only by personal ambition, or sprung only from accidental causes, or circumstances. The German Reformation was not attributable to the desire of Luther to marry Catherine Von Bora, nor the English Reformation to an amour between Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, nor the rise of Mohammedanism to an epileptic fit of the false prophet. It is only a rationalistic and unbelieving subjective pragmatism that would thus interpret history, accounting for all things upon personal and partizan

grounds, or at least, like a few historians, rising no higher than the human level of a merely psychological explanation. What can be more foolish than to represent the religious and civil commotions of the sixteenth century as the result of a merely human purpose conceived in the minds of the Reformers? How grandly does the Reformation appear on the contrary, as the work of God, in the pages of D'Aubigne, precisely as does the overthrow of Paganism in the pages of Neander and Schaff! What scientific and impartial historian, in the future, will ever dream of accounting for our own Civil Rebellion by a mere allusion to the election of a "sectional President," or the numerous schisms of the Church by a mere reference to "ecclesiastical resolutions?" Pretexts are not causes. Occasions are not reasons. Let us be sure there is a deeper, broader, truer, higher view than this. Events that have swollen into life and dashed upon the shore of time, have come rolling forward silently but surely out of the deep bosom of the past. The movement of history did not begin yesterday. God's purpose has travelled on through the ages with majestic march. It travels on yet, omnipotent to-day, as in the day when Pharaoh and his host sank before it, like lead in the waters, or as when it summoned Assyrians and Babylonians, Greeks and Romans, to exercise and punish a chosen people for their sins. History is but the embodiment of that whole purpose in one grand organic movement, the end of which is the accomplishment of the Supreme Will, even as this is the end of all the steps by which that movement is measured. It is a movement continuous, unitous, unobstructed, universal, a movement coordinated in all its parts, from age to age, irresistible, irrepressible, imperishable, a drama of Divine Providence, embracing the fortunes of the Church and the World together, abounding in seeming contradictions yet profound-

est harmonies, in ever-recurring retributions and blessings, thundering and lightening along its way in solemn progression, though the careless multitude heed it not, increasing in volume and power to the final and sublime catastrophe, and ceasing only when He who is the Alpha and Omega of it all, shall utter from his throne "*It is done!*"

If, in terminating this discourse, I may refer, but one moment, to the existing history of our beloved Church and our country, it is only to invoke the spirit of this whole conception as that which alone can furnish a true key to the interpretation of it all. May God graciously condescend to show us its importance! for we live in one of the mightiest epochs of time to which the centuries have ever given birth. Its impulse dates back, through the Incarnation, to the eternal purpose of God in Christ. Its effect will reach on to the end of the world, What we need, most of all, to feel, is that the "Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." For though the cup of agony and punishment be the bitterest any people can ever drink, and the baptism of blood and fire the severest they can ever know, still, without a true apprehension of the "finger," the "hand," the "footsteps" of God, in it all, it were worse than in vain as to any profit or instruction. The cup of confession must follow that of indignation, and the only baptism that is efficacious to regenerate is a baptism of light and power in the understanding and the heart. It is not possible to regenerate a people without regenerating their thought and their feeling. We must learn to think as God thinks, to feel as God feels, and look on things as God looks on them. This, then, is the lesson of the hour, as taught by history, both to the Church and the nation, that man is the minister of the divine will in the ongoing of an infinitely glorious purpose, that the people of God are the central power in this ongoing, that Christ Himself, the source of all providence, presides over

it all, and that to see and acknowledge this, in the existing facts around us, shaping all our relations to each other and to the world, is to give them their true explanation, and that, in so doing, we not only exalt His wisdom and justify His providence, but, at the same time, purify ourselves, fortify our faith, and stimulate our zeal. Apart from this view, our whole life, as a nation, is robbed of its profoundest significance, and the whole life of the Church divested of its supreme dignity and glory. Without it, our individual christian life would become nerveless and powerless, sinking back into the passive dreamy contemplation of the anchorite or the stylite, and of value no more than that of the Mussulman Fakir or the Indian Yogi. All our sufferings, all our conflicts, for liberty, religion, truth, order, law, in which, oftentimes, the whole inestimable treasure has been staked upon the issue of a single combat, all that is imperishable in the past, all that crowns and adorns the present, all that, on the one hand, perpetuates in our hearts and memories the love and admiration we feel for the manly and heroic, the great and the good who, in ages past, have surrendered themselves to the long drawn and weary warfare against sin, and submitted to sacrifice, pain, and martyrdom, in the service of God, and all that, on the other, prompts us to labor, suffer, and endure, not only for ourselves but for those who shall come after—all this, without the abiding consciousness of the presence of the Lord Jesus, presiding over all, inflaming us with His own inspiration, working in us and through us, and with us, and guiding us on in the fulfilment of His own adorable purpose, would be but a heart-crushing illusion and mockery, an inexcusable and tormenting irony, making, of human life, one vast somnambulism, wherein the soul deludes itself with shadows and dreams, and of the history of the Church and the world, one solemn

travesty and mimicry of all that God has said, and all that God intends.

Unto Him, then, who rides in the heavens, and whose name is Jah, to Him the Prince of the Kings of the earth and only Head of His redeemed Church, organizing victory with every step of His providence, and hastening His coming, be dedicated the whole historic page, for "of Him and to Him, and through Him are all things, to whom be glory forever, Amen."

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